

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
 USIA-06 /064 W

----- 091910 /13

R 221110Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8156
INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 37677

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: FR, PINT
SUBJECT: LEADING POLLING INSTITUTE PREDICTS BIG VICTORY
FOR LEFT OPPOSITION IN NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

SUMMARY: RECENT POLL BY LEADING PUBLIC RESEARCH INSTI-
TUTE (IFOP) SHOWS THAT LEFT OPPOSITION WOULD HAVE BEEN
BIG WINNER IN LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IF SUCH ELECTIONS
HAD BEEN HELD IN DECEMBER. END SUMMARY

1. POLL PUBLISHED IN RECENT ISSUE OF PARIS MATCH
(ARTICLE BEING POUCHED TO EUR/WE) REINFORCES RESULTS OF
OTHER POLLS INDICATING THAT UNITED LEFT (PS-PC-MRG)
WOULD GAIN SIGNIFICANTLY IN LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. US-
ING SAMPLE BALLOTS DISTRIBUTED IN 120 ELECTORAL DISTRICTS
AND EXTRAPOLATING RESULTS FOR THE 473 DISTRICTS IN METRO-
POLITAN FRANCE, POLL DEPICTED THREE HYPOTHETICAL SITUA-
TIONS: (1) LEFT VS. SINGLE MAJORITY CANDIDATE; (2)
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LEFT VS TWO MAJORITY CANDIDATES (GAULLIST AND INDEPENDENT
REPUBLICAN OR CENTRIST); (3) LEFT VS THREE SEPARATE
MAJORITY CANDIDATES (GAULLIST, IR, CENTRIST). THE LEFT
CAME OUT THE WINNER IN ALL THREE HYPOTHETICAL SITUATIONS,
RANGING FROM A HIGH OF 298 SEATS (CASE 1) TO A LOW OF
252 SEATS; IN EACH CASE THE LEFT WOULD HAVE OBTAINED AN

ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

2. THE IFOP POLL IS ANOTHER IN A CONTINUING SERIES OF SURVEYS SHOWING THAT THE LEFT WOULD DO WELL IN NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. EMBASSY DOES NOT WANT TO SINGLE OUT THIS POLL AS HAVING ANY SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE, ALTHOUGH SURVEY IS PURPORTEDLY ONE OF THE MOST THOROUGH AND EXTENSIVE TO DATE. SEVERAL RESULTS ARE, HOWEVER, INTERESTING:

- IN ALL THREE CASES THE GAULLISTS (RPR) WOULD HAVE RECEIVED MORE VOTES THAN THEIR MAJORITY PARTNERS, A TURN-AROUND FROM PREVIOUS POLLS THAT SHOWED THE IR AS THE LEADING VOTE-GETTER IN THE MAJORITY.
- DESPITE THE PERCENTAGE DROP IN COMMUNIST VOTES FROM THE 1973 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS (19 IN THE POLL VS. 21.4 ACTUAL IN 1973), THE PC WOULD STILL OBTAIN 83-85 SEATS IN AN ELECTION, A GAIN OF 9-11 SEATS OVER ITS PRESENT REPRESENTATION IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.
- THE MAJORITY WOULD FAIR BEST, BOTH IN TERMS OF SEATS AND PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTE, IF IT PRESENTED THREE SEPARATE CANDIDATES IN AN ELECTION RATHER THAN A SINGLE COMMON CANDIDATE. THIS RESULT WILL MITIGATE AGAINST THOSE PUSHING FOR SINGLE CANDIDATES PER CONSTITUENCY UNDER THE HEADING, "PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY."

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3. DESPITE THE RATHER GLOOMY PICTURE FOR THE MAJORITY,
SEVERAL CAVEATS SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND.

-- AS EMBASSY HAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, ACTUAL RESULTS OF INDIVIDUAL ELECTIONS MAY BE VERY CLOSE (IN 1973, 27 SEATS WERE WON BY LESS THAN 500 VOTES), AND IFOP EXTRAPOLATIONS MAY DISTORT THE "TOSS-UP" NATURE OF MANY RACES. POLL DID NOT PROVIDE FOR BLANK BALLOTS, ABSTENTIONS OR UNDECIDED VOTERS (WHOSE VOTES IN AN ACTUAL ELECTION MAY WELL PROVIDE THE MARGIN FOR VICTORY). OUR REVIEW OF SOME PREDICTED "WINNERS" INDICATES THAT THESE RACES PROMISE TO BE HARD-FOUGHT AND ARE TOO CLOSE TO CALL AT THE PRESENT TIME.

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-- POLL WAS TAKEN BEFORE THE DECEMBER 5 GAULLIST RALLY THAT CREATED NEW RPR PARTY AND THEREFORE DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT WHAT EFFECT, IF ANY, THIS DEVELOPMENT MIGHT HAVE HAD ON VOTER INTENTIONS.

-- POLL WAS PRESENTED AS A LEFT VS. MAJORITY CONFRONTATION, AND DOES NOT REFLECT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE LEFT MIGHT IN FACT PRESENT TWO OR MORE SEPARATE CANDIDATES IN AN ELECTION.

RUSH

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